

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /031 W
----- 064835

O 080100Z NOV 73 ZFF-6
FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3718
SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
CJCS IMMEDIATE
CINCPAC IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE
COMUSSAG IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - T E X T

SECSTATE PASS NSC, AID
SAIGON ALSO FOR USDAO

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, CB, VS
SUBJ: SHIPPING AND SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS ON THE MEKONG

REF: CINCPAC 021836Z NOV 73 (NOTAL)

1. IN REFTEL CINCPAC RAISED THREE QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE SECURITY
AND EFFICIENCY OF THE MEKONG LOC IN THE COMING DRY SEASON:

(A) SHOULDN'T WE AIM AT 90-DAY IN-COUNTRY STOCKS LEVELS OF AMMO,
RICE, AND POL, TO THE EXTENT PERMITTED BY STORAGE, RECEPTION, AND
TRANSPORTATION CAPABILITIES AS WELL AS COMMODITY AVAILABILITY
AND IMMEDIATELY TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO REACH THAT LEVEL
OVER A PERIOD OF 30 DAYS?

(B) WOULDN'T THE EFFICIENCY AND PERFORMANCE OF THE MEKONG
LOC BE INCREASED BY ESTABLISHING A DIRECTOR FOR COORDINATION OF
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ALL PHASES OF THE LOC, INCLUDING CHARTERING, SCHEDULING, COMP-
OSITION, ASSEMBLING, TRANSIT, AND PROTECTION, AND WITH AUTHORITY TO
REPRESENT THE TRIPARTITE DEPUTIES?

(C) ARE THERE OTHER URGENT MEASURES WE SHOULD TAKE TO IMPROVE THE SECURITY OF THE MEKONG?

2. THESE QUESTIONS TRIGGERED AN INTENSIVE AND PRODUCTIVE REVIEW OF MEKONG PLANNING AND REQUIREMENTS, FIRST ON NOVEMBER 4 BETWEEN DEP COMUSSAG MAJ GEN HUNT, DEFENSE ATTACHE SAIGON MAJ GEN MURRAY AND THIS MISSION, THEN IN THE COURSE OF CINCPAC J-4 RADM FOWLER'S VISITS TO USSAG NOVEMBER 5 AND TO PHNOM PENH NOVEMBER 6 AND 7.

3. AS SEEN BY THIS MISSION AND AS GENERALLY AGREED ON BY USSAG, THE ANSWERS THAT EMERGE FROM THIS REVIEW ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(A) THERE ARE COMPELLING BUDGETARY AND SECURITY REASONS FOR NOT ATTEMPTING TO ACHIEVE A 90-DAY AMMO AND POL STOCK IN 30 DAYS. HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO BUILD OVER A 60-DAY PERIOD TO A 45 DAYS STOCK FOR AMMO AND TO 60 DAYS FOR MILITARY AND SOME CIVILIAN POL. WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO GET AS MUCH RICE IN COUNTRY AS POSSIBLE, AND NEED IN DECEMBER BOTH THE SECOND 12,500 TON THAI TRANCHE AND MORE VIETNAMESE RICE. BUT WE CANNOT HOPE TO REACH A 90-DAY LEVEL BEFORE MID-1974, IF THEN.

(B) CLOSE INQUIRY TO ALL DIRECTLY INVOLVED DISCLOSES THAT THERE IS NO RPT NO EVIDENCE THAT ORGANIZATION (AS OPPOSED TO PROTECTION) OF SHIPPING ON THE MEKONG IS A SERIOUS CURRENT OR POTENTIAL PROBLEM. IT IS THUS NOT RPT NOT NECESSARY TO CREATE A SPECIAL MEKONG COORDINATOR. MOREOVER, THE POLITICAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS POSED BY ATTEMPTING TO UNIFY THE PRESENT ECLECTIC SYSTEM UNDER ONE CHIEF CONVINCE US THAT IT IS NOT RPT NOT DESIRABLE TO TRY TO DO SO. HOWEVER THE EXISTING SYSTEM CAN BE MADE MORE EFFICIENT BY (I) RENEWED EFFORTS TO ADHERE TO A REGULAR CONVOY SCHEDULE, DISPENSING WITH SPECIAL CONVOYS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, AND (II) ACCELERATING THE ARRIVAL TO PHNOM PENH OF A SECOND NAVAL ATTACHE, WHOSE OFFICE IS NOW THE FOCAL POINT IN CAMBODIA FOR CONVOY ORGANIZATION.

(C) REAL, MEASURABLE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE MEKONG LOC DEPEND ON TWO FACTORS. (I) FANK ACTION TO EXECUTE THE ZONE SPECIALE MEKONG (ZSM) PLAN FOR GARRISONING THE RIVER; AND (II) USG ACTION TO
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PROVIDE AN ADDITIONAL RIVERINE TASK FORCE CONSISTING OF 44 CRAFT.

4. HIGHER STOCKS, THE SURGE IN SUPPLY, AND ADDITIONAL RIVERINE CRAFT ALL REQUIRE MORE MONEY. THIS MESSAGE GIVES FIRST THE ARGUMENTATION BEHIND THE CONCLUSIONS IN PARA 3 (A) THROUGH (C) ABOVE. IT THEN REQUESTS ACTION, INCLUDING FUNDING, OF THE AGENCIES INVOLVED.

5. WE HAVE FOUND THE EXCHANGE VERY USEFUL AND LOOK FORWARD TO CINPAC'S COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE ACTIONS PROPOSED.

PART I: TARGET STOCKS AND ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE THEM.

6. FOLLOWING ARE THE RESULTS OF OUR EXAMINATION OF MEASURES TO PRO-

VIDE IMMEDIATE LARGE SCALE INCREASES IN THE SHIPMENT OF NEEDED MATERIALS TO PHNOM PENH VIA THE MEKONG.

7. RICE. THE PRIMARY CONSTRAINT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A 90-DAY STOCK LEVEL IS SUPPLY AVAILABILITY WORLDWIDE. AS OF NOVEMBER 2, THERE WERE APPROXIMATELY 10,875 MT OF RICE IN WAREHOUSES IN PHNOM PENH, KOMPONG SOM AND UTAPAO. DURING NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER SLIGHTLY MORE THAN 40,000 MT OF FIRST TRANCHE THAI, PL 480 AND LOAN RICE FROM VIETNAM AND KOREA ARE EXPECTED TO ARRIVE IN CAMBODIA. ASSUMING A CONSUMPTION RATE OF ABOUT 19,000 MT PER MONTH THESE ARRIVALS SHOULD LEAVE APPROXIMATELY THREE WEEKS' SUPPLY OF RICE ON HAND IN CAMBODIA AS OF JANUARY 1, 1974. BUILDUP OF STOCKS FROM THAT MOMENT ON WILL DEPEND ON: (A) THE PL 480 PIPELINE FROM THE UNITED STATES; (B) WHETHER OR NOT AUTHORITY IS GRANTED TO PROCEED WITH THE SECOND 12,500 MT TRANCHE OF RICE FROM THAILAND;

(C) THE AVAILABILITY OF FURTHER LOAN RICE FROM VIET-NAM; AND (D) THE ARRIVAL OF DONATIONS OF JAPANESE RICE, EXPECTED FOR JANUARY. GIVEN THE LEAD TIME INVOLVED IN SHIPPING RICE FROM THE UNITED STATES AND COMPETING DEMANDS ON U.S. RICE AVAILABILITY WE ESTIMATE THAT RICE STOCKS WILL NOT REACH EVEN A 60-DAY LEVEL UNTIL MARCH 1974 UNLESS RICE CAN BE PROVIDED FROM THAILAND AND VIETNAM. THE GKR PRESENTLY HAS APPROXIMATELY 70,000 MT OF RICE STORAGE UNDER CONTRACT AND MORE SPACE COULD BE OBTAINED IF REQUIRED. IF NECESSARY PHNOM PENH PORT COULD PROBABLY HANDLE UP TO 7,000 MT PER WEEK ON A SUSTAINED BASIS (WITH

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ACTION SS-30

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O 080100Z NOV 73 ZFF-6
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INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE
COMUSSAG IMMEDIATE

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IN THE RELATIVE ABSENCE OF ENEMY CHALLENGE ON THE MEKONG IN THE WET SEASON. THE DETERIORATION OF KHMER-HELD RIVER BANGK POSITIONS OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS (A DETERIORATION WHICH THE MNK CANNOT WHOLLY REVERSE THIS DRY SEASON) MAKES NECESSARY A SUBSTANTIALLY GREATER INVESTMENT IN FIRE POWER THAN ORIGINALLY

PLANNED, IF WE ARE TO KEEP THE RIVER OPEN AND MEET OTHER CRITICAL MNK COMMITMENTS.

29. THE OPTIMUM COMPOSITION OF THIS ADDITIONAL FORCE IS AS FOLLOWS:

- (1) FIVE MONITORS (WITH 105 MM GUNS)
- (2) EIGHT ATC'S
- (3) FOUR ASPB'S
- (4) TWO MRS'S
- (5) THREE LCM8'S
- (6) SEVEN LCM6'S
- (7) FIFTEEN PBR'S (RADAR EQUIPPED)

30. TO BE EFFECTIVE THIS DRY SEASON THE ABOVE REQUIREMENT IS IMMEDIATE; FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$8,550,000 ARE URGENTLY NEEDED FOR PROCUREMENT OF THESE CRAFT. PROCUREMENT ACTION
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FOR A LIMITED NUMBER OF NIGHT OBSERVATION DEVICES, WITHIN AVAILABLE FUNDING, HAS ALSO BEEN INITIATED, AND FURTHER SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS WILL BE FORWARDED SEPARATELY.

PART IV: ACTION RECOMMENDED:

31. TO BUILD UP TO DESIRED STOCK LEVELS:

- (A) AUTHORIZE PURCHASE OF SECOND 12,500 MT OF THAI RICE AND AN ADDITIONAL 7,500 MT LOAN OF VIETNAMESE RICE (ACTION: AID/W).
- (B) FUND ADDITIONAL CIVILIAN POL PROCUREMENT, PERHAPS AT EMERGENCY PRICES (ACTION: AID/W).
- (C) PROVIDE 1500 CUBIC METERS AVGAS 115 AND 700 CUBIC METERS JP-4 TO FANK PRIOR TO 1 JANUARY 1974 (ACTION: CINCPAC)
- (D) DEVELOP POL RATIONING AND PRICE INCREASE PACKAGE FOR VKR. (ACTION: AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH).
- (E) ORGANIZE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW AMMO DEPOT (ACTION: CHMEDTC WITH CINCPAC).
- (F) AUTHORIZE DIRECT MEDTC DRAWINGS ON US AMMO STOCKS IN VIETNAM (ACTION: AMEMBASSY SAIGON, USDAO SAIGON). TO PRE-EXISTING SECOND QUARTER CONSUMPTION REQUIREMENTS. (ACTION: CINCPAC, SECDEF)

32. TO IMPROVE CONVOY ADMINISTRATION:

- (A) ACCELERATE ARRIVAL OF ADDITIONAL NAVAL ATTACHE FROM FEBRUARY TO NOVEMBER (ACTION: DIA)
- (B) RENEW EFFORTS TO ADHERE MORE CLOSELY TO REGULARY CONVOY SCHEDULE. (ACTION: AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH)

33. TO EXECUTE THE ZONE SPECIALE MEKONG PLAN:

- (A) ASSIST MNK TO REACH RECRUITMENT GOALS. (ACTION: AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH).

(B) FUND \$8.55 MILLION ADDITIONAL RIVERINE TASK FORCE.

(ACTION: CINCPAC, SEC DEF)

ENDERS

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